



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

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Assignment Title: Reflection on career journey to date and future professional development

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AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT

I confirm that I have not presented any AI-generated text as my own work. I confirm that I have retained copies of my drafts and notes, as evidence.

This reflective essay looks at my career path so far and explains how what I learned from the Professional Career Development module will guide my future progress. Career development is an ongoing and changing process shaped by experience, honest reflection, and careful decisions. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage self-reflection and the practical use of employability models to support better planned career development.

The essay uses Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1968), which gives a clear structure that gives simple description to deeper evaluation, analysis, and future planning. Gibbs' model is very suitable for employability reflection because it promotes organised thinking and helps people turn reflection into practical, realistic, and clear and achievable future actions.

Discription

My career journey began at the age of 14 when I worked in a hair salon for one year, helping with cleaning the floors, maintaining equipment, and preparing stations for clients.

I then moved into hospitality, working in two pubs over four years, where I started as a waiter and kitchen assistant. My responsibilities included washing dishes, organising shelves, and arranging fridges and freezers, as well as checking stock levels and expiry dates. In front of house, I took and served food orders to customers. These roles required direct interaction with customers, handling complaints, managing multiple tasks under pressure, and working effectively as part of a team.

At the age of 19, I decided to pursue a new career path and trained to become a support worker. This led to a 12-year career supporting adults with learning disabilities and autistic individuals to have a stronger voice, greater choice, and more control over their lives. I helped people maintain their health, manage their finances, and take their medication, while most importantly encouraging and supporting them to live as independently as possible. Promoting choice and control. Using the active support approach where I provided just enough support. Not too much or not too little. Giving opportunities and pushing boundaries ensuring the individuals supported had a fulfilled life like anybody else. Whilst providing support, I would follow all policies and procedures such as health & safety and safeguarding. I understood all risk assessments ensuring the safety of all individuals minimising any risk.

Feelings

Reflecting on these experiences, I feel proud of the personal and professional development I have achieved. Beginning work at a young age allowed me to build responsibility, self-confidence, and a positive attitude towards hard work. While some duties in the hair salon and hospitality roles were routine and physically tiring, I remained enthusiastic and willing to learn. Working in busy pub settings could be stressful, particularly when handling complaints or balancing several tasks at the same time, but these situations helped me develop resilience and strong communication skills.

Training and working as a support worker was the most rewarding part of my career. I developed a real sense of purpose, knowing that my work was having a meaningful impact on people's lives. Helping individuals gain choice, control, and independence brought me pride and satisfaction. Although the role could be emotionally challenging and required patience and accountability, especially when dealing with risk and safeguarding responsibilities, I felt a deep sense of fulfilment in empowering individuals to live safe, meaningful, and independent lives.

Evaluation

When reviewing my career journey so far, I can see both positive experiences and challenges that have helped me grow. A key strength throughout all my roles has been my adaptability and dedication. Beginning work at a young age allowed me to develop a strong sense of responsibility and dependability, which I carried forward into my hospitality and support work positions. Working in fast-paced environments strengthened my communication skills, increased my confidence, and taught me how to stay calm under pressure. In my role as a support worker, I built empathy, patience, and a solid understanding of safeguarding, risk assessments, and person-centered approaches, all of which are important and transferable skills.

At the same time, there were difficulties. Hospitality work was often physically tiring and at times stressful, which challenged my resilience. In support work, the emotional demands and the responsibility of protecting individuals' safety and wellbeing could sometimes feel

intense. I faced situations that required tough decisions and the management of complex behaviors, which called for strong professional judgement and confidence. Nevertheless, these challenges helped shape my development and strengthened both my personal values and professional skills.

Analysis

Applying employability models from the module provided greater structure and clarity to my reflection. During a taught session, I completed a personal SWOT analysis, which helped me clearly identify key strengths such as communication, adaptability, empathy, and the ability to build trusting relationships. These strengths are particularly relevant to my role as a support worker for adults with learning disabilities, where effective communication, patience, and relationship-building are essential for providing person-centred care and supporting individuals in their daily lives.

The SWOT analysis also identified areas where I could improve, particularly my tendency to experience self-doubt and uncertainty when making long-term career decisions. Recognising these challenges allowed me to reflect on how they may influence my confidence in professional situations. It also emphasised the importance of building greater self-confidence and continuing to develop my skills and knowledge as I progress within the care sector.

Conclusion

In conclusion, using Gibbs' Reflective Cycle has enabled me to carefully reflect on my experiences and personal growth in my role as a support worker for adults with learning disabilities. This reflective process helped me identify important strengths, including communication, empathy, adaptability, and the ability to develop positive relationships, all of which are vital when delivering person-centred support. It also allowed me to recognise areas where I can continue to improve, particularly in building my confidence and further developing my professional knowledge within the care sector.

Action Plan

Following this reflection, I have identified several actions to support my development as a

support worker for adults with learning disabilities. Firstly, I plan to continue improving my communication skills to better support individuals with different communication needs and promote independence.

Secondly, I aim to build my confidence by taking part in additional training, such as safeguarding and person-centred care, to strengthen my knowledge and skills within the care sector.

Finally, I will continue reflecting on my practice using models such as Gibbs' Reflective Cycle to learn from my experiences and identify areas for ongoing improvement as I progress in my career.

References

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